



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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MUSKRAT SKINNERS VIE IN GRAND NATIONAL CONTEST ON EAST COAST

Ace muskrat skimmers from Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, and Virginia are all set to participate in a contest for the 1941 Grand National Muskrat-Skinning Championship of America on February 1, climaxing the Cambridge (Md.) Outdoor Life Show sponsored by the Cambridge Civic Committee.

First held in 1939 at the suggestion of Dr. Herbert L. Dozier, director of the United States Fur Animal Field Station of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, the muskrat skimmers Grand National has since attracted Nation-wide attention not only in fur trading circles but among the general public because of the oddity of the contest.

Last year more than 2,000 persons packed a small Maryland theatre to capacity to watch the deft fur pelters at work, while 1,000 other visitors stood outside to listen to a "skin by skin" account of the fur pelting speed artists at work.

Grand National Muskrat-Skinning Champion of 1940 was Curtis Insley, boss trapper and pride of the Blackwater section of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Champion Insley, an exponent of the knee-hold school of pelters, won the contest with the record-breaking time of "backing" five muskrats out of their pelts in 2 minutes.

Insley also won the special Blindfolded Skinning Contest, pelting one of the fur animals by touch alone without a cut or tear in 41-2/5 seconds. Runnerup was George North, 58-year-old trapper from the Drawbridge district of Maryland, who finished in 55 seconds.

Skinning a fur animal is an art, according to the authorities, and many trappers become proficient both in pelting the animal properly and doing it quickly. During last year's contest, at least nine different methods of skinning a muskrat were used.

In conjunction with the Outdoor Life Show sponsored by the Cambridge Civic Committee, the Maryland Outdoor Life Federation will hold a regional meeting in Cambridge. Many organizations are preparing an exhibit for the show, among them the Maryland Outdoor Life Federation, the State Game and Inland Fisheries Commission, the State Forestry Department, United States Soil Conservation, the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, the United States Fur Animal Field Station, Cambridge Yacht Club, and the high schools of Cambridge and Crapo.

Other features of the show will include wood chopping, archery, a fur fashion show, and a muskrat supper at which the "marsh rabbits" will be served in various ways.

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